

Message Text

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21

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 EUR-12 AF-08 ARA-06 NEA-10 DHA-02

AGR-05 AID-05 EB-07 USIA-06 COME-00 TRSE-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 IGA-02 /127 W

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R 290334Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4969

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USMISSION GENEVA

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 11859

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAID, UNWFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, VN, VS

SUBJECT: FOOD AID TO VIET-NAM

REF: STATE 100290

SUMMARY. THE VIETNAMESE HAVE REQUESTED FOOD ASSISTANCE
FROM AT LEAST SEVERAL INTERNATIONAL BODIES. END SUMMARY.

1. THE EMBASSY HAS BEEN TRYING FOR SOME TIME TO EVALUATE
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THERE IS A SERIOUS FOOD PROBLEM IN
VIET-NAM. ON THE ONE HAND A VISITOR TO HANOI LIKE
CITIBANK REPRESENTATIVE VEMBAR RANGANATHAN TOLD THE PRESS
APRIL 22 THAT "MOST PEOPLE SEEM TO HAVE ENOUGH FOOD TO
EAT" AND THAT DRV AGRICULTURAL OFFICIALS HAVE SAID PRIVATELY
THAT VIET-NAM WOULD BE SELF-SUFFICIENT IN FOOD IN ONE YEAR.
ON THE OTHER HAND, A REPRESENTATIVE OF AN INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATION WHO LIVES IN HANOI TOLD US RECENTLY THAT
A SERIOUS SHORTFALL IN RICE PRODUCTION IN VIET-NAM,
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PARTICULARLY IN THE NORTH, HAS VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES VERY

WORRIED AS TO HOW THEY WILL MAKE UP THE DIFFERENCE.
HE SAID THAT HARDEST HIT IS THE AREA FROM THE DMZ NORTH
THROUGH WHAT IS NOW CALLED NGHE TINH PROVINCE. ALTHOUGH
VIET-NAM'S FRIENDS WILL HELP TO SOME EXTENT, THE VIETNAMESE
GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN GIVING CONSIDERABLE THOUGHT TO THE
PROBLEM SINCE MID-MARCH AND IS APPEALING TO INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS FOR ASSISTANCE.

2. ACCORDING TO THE RATHER SPARSE INFORMATION AVAILABLE
IN BANGKOK, THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES ARE CURRENTLY CONSIDER-
ING PROVIDING FOOD ASSISTANCE TO VIET-NAM. THE VIETNAMESE
HAVE REQUESTED UNICEF (WHICH, AFTER THE TAKEOVER IN CY 75,
PROVIDED FOOD SUPPORT IN THE SOUTH FROM VOLUNTARY CONTRI-
BUTIONS WORTH APPROXIMATELY \$5 MILLION AS PART OF THE
SECRETARY GENERAL'S APPEAL) TO SUPPLY IT WITH POWDERED
MILK. THEY HAVE ASKED UNHCR FOR CEREAL GRAINS (PROBABLY
FOR THE NORTH), A REQUEST WE SUSPECT WILL BE MET. (UNHCR
ALSO FURNISHED FOOD ASSISTANCE TO THE SOUTH LAST YEAR AS
PART OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S APPEAL BUT NONE TO THE
NORTH). ALTHOUGH ROME IS UNDOUBTEDLY BETTER INFORMED WITH
RESPECT TO FAO/WFP, WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE MISSION WHICH
VISITED SOUTH VIET-NAM IN MARCH WAS AMENABLE TO PROVIDING
THE SOUTH \$35 MILLION WORTH OF FOOD (WHEAT AND WHEAT FLOUR),
ALTHOUGH THE VIETNAMESE HOPED TO RECEIVE A LARGER (\$100
MILLION) AMOUNT. VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES AGREED THAT FAO
COULD INSPECT DISTRIBUTION OF THE COMMODITIES, AND ANOTHER
MISSION IS PLANNED FOR JUNE OR JULY. AS FOR PRIVATE
ORGANIZATIONS, THE LOCAL FAO OFFICE ADVISES THAT THE WORLD
COUNCIL OF CHURCHES' FUND FOR REHABILITATION AND RECON-
STRUCTION OF INDOCHINA IS WORKING ON A PROGRAM, AS WELL,
BUT THE EMBASSY HAS NOT BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN CONTACTING THE
LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE.

3. ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF AN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION
SAID THAT IN HIS OWN DISCUSSIONS AT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE
FOREIGN MINISTRY, HE REVIEWED THE LIST OF THE WORLD'S
MAJOR RICE PRODUCERS AND EXPORTERS WITH A MIDDLE-LEVEL
OFFICIAL. THE OFFICIAL INDICATED THAT THE DRV WOULD HAVE
NO OBJECTION TO RECEIVING BILATERAL FOOD AID FROM EITHER
FRIEND OR FOE.

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4. IT WOULD HELP US IN FOLLOWING THIS MATTER TO RECEIVE
INFORMATION ABOUT THE VIETNAMESE FOOD PROBLEM WHICH MAY
DEVELOP DURING THE PRESENT WFP MEETING IN ROME (REFTEL).
WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

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